

## Happy birthday, U.S. Coast Guard ...

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world is impressive. On any given day they may save 15 lives; assist 117 people in distress; conduct 90 search and rescue cases; interdict and rescue 15 illegal migrants at sea; board 4 high-interest vessels; board 192 vessels of law enforcement interest; seize 71 pounds of marijuana and 662 pounds of cocaine with a street value of 21.1 million; conduct 317 vessel safety checks; teach 63 boating safety courses; and investigate 20 vessel casualties involving collisions and groundings.

The relevancy of the Coast Guards mission can't be measured in numbers, but in today's world, it is measured in saving people's lives, cleaning up the environment and providing security for our hometown maritime ports.

"Stand proud all members of Team Coast Guard. Reflect back that many Coast Guard members have gone before us, get safely and successfully through your present mission, and look beyond the horizon to set the right course for the future," said Lim.

The Coast Guard presence in and around GTMO might not be very visible, but from the NAVSTA point of view, their mission here is extremely vital.

"Aug. 4, marks 216 years since Congress first authorized the building of '10 boats' establishing a 'fleet of cutters,' the forerunner to today's modern U.S. Coast Guard," said NAVSTA Commanding Officer, CAPT Mark Leary. "Here in GTMO, the U.S. Coast Guard provides aviation maintenance support as well as port security."

The Coast Guard has been continuously at sea since its inception in 1790, although the name Coast Guard didn't come



Photo by MC1(SW) Terry Matlock

***MK1 Carlos Harris, Engineering Dept. Petty Officer in charge, troubleshoots an engine of a U.S. Coast Guard Viper.***

about until 1915 when the Revenue Cutter Service was merged with the Lifesaving Service. The Lighthouse Service joined the Coast Guard in 1939, followed by the Bureau of Navigation and Steamboat Inspection in 1946. Finally, in 1967, after 177 years in the Treasury Department, the Coast Guard was transferred to the newly formed Department of Transportation.

Its mission and size has increased significantly since the War on Terrorism began. The Coast Guard has expanded their force by about 2,000 members per year, which is bringing the total force to about 45,000 uniformed members, and it will continue to provide unique benefits to the nation as well as its distinctive blend of military, humanitarian, and civilian law-enforcement.

"On this, the 216th anniversary of the founding of today's modern U.S. Coast Guard, I want to say how pleased I am to have the Coast Guard units and personnel as part of our GTMO team," added Leary. Happy Birthday and Semper Paratus!"

## Scorpions can be found in GTMO

Scorpions are ancient arachnids (related to spiders) and fossil records show they existed over 400 million years ago.

They occur in habitats ranging from forest to desert but they are more common in arid desert environments.

There are at least eight different species of scorpion potentially occurring at GTMO. Six of these are in the genus *Centruroides*, which translates from Latin to "sharp-ended tail-like." Scorpions are predatory and use this venom to capture and kill prey.

Scorpions hunt actively by searching for prey and sometimes ambush prey that wanders near their lairs. When the victim is close enough, the scorpion makes a mad dash and captures its prey with powerful front claws called chelae. It then injects the venom and holds on to the prey until it dies. Once dead, the victim is eaten headfirst. Prey items include insects, centipedes, millipedes, snails, spiders and reptiles.

Of the eight species mentioned above that potentially occur at GTMO, all are thick tailed but none are considered medically important as a threat to humans.

